



State of South Carolina  
Office of The Lieutenant Governor

André Bauer  
Lieutenant Governor

Office on Aging  
Cornelia Gibbons  
Director

**For Immediate Release:**

May 22, 2006

Contact: Frank Adams  
(803) 734-9912  
[adams@aging.sc.gov](mailto:adams@aging.sc.gov)

or: David Lucas  
(803) 734-9917  
[dlucas@aging.sc.gov](mailto:dlucas@aging.sc.gov)

**Second Annual You Can! Walk Draws Seniors to Riverbanks Zoo**

*Lt. Governor's Office on Aging campaign to promote moderate exercise and a healthy diet for older adults enters its second year.*

(Columbia, S.C.) Ostriches, gorillas, an eight foot alligator and a Dixieland jazz band greeted seniors from around the state who traveled to Columbia's Riverbanks Zoo today to celebrate Older Americans Month and help raise awareness about the importance of diet and exercise for healthy aging.

Lt. Governor André Bauer, head of the State Office on Aging, told the more than 300 participants in the second annual statewide "You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging" Walk that two of the most powerful weapons they have to fight many of the chronic diseases associated with old age are engaging in moderate exercise and adopting healthy eating habits.

"I'm here to tell you that everyone can benefit from adding an exercise routine to their daily schedule," said Bauer. "Everyone can change their life for the better by changing the way that they eat, and no one – no matter what their age – is unable to make positive changes in their life by making healthier choices."

Walk participants also heard from Dr. Victor Hirth, a Palmetto Health geriatric physician and Chairperson of the panel that oversees South Carolina's first-in-the-nation Geriatric Loan Forgiveness program. Dr. Hirth described the importance of the new program in attracting the fellowship trained geriatric doctors who will be instrumental in treating a senior population that is expected to more than double in South Carolina over the next two decades. He also introduced Dr. Donna Ray, a member of the first group of eight doctors to receive repayment of a portion of their medical school loans in exchange for a commitment to practice in the state for five years.

**-more-**

**Lt. Governor's Office on Aging**

May 22, 2006

Physical therapists from Palmetto Health's Geriatric program instructed the walk participants in a series of low impact stretching exercises before Lt. Governor Bauer led the group on a walk through the zoo grounds, with the Dick Goodwin Orchestra providing an up tempo rendition of *When the Saints Go Marching In* for inspiration.

The "You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging" campaign was designed to increase the number of older adults in the U.S. who are active and healthy. "You Can!" is the aging component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's "Steps to a Healthier US" initiative, which encourages Americans of every age to make healthier choices. The campaign takes direct aim at the rising epidemic of obesity and chronic disease among Americans of all ages, including older adults. Improved food choices and increased physical activity are two healthier lifestyle choices that help prevent, delay, or manage serious health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure.

In South Carolina, Lt. Governor André Bauer has led "You Can!" walks held in conjunction with health fairs and senior expos in communities around the state to help raise public awareness of these issues. Programs and services funded by the Older Americans Act and coordinated by the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging are available in all counties to help older South Carolinians stay fit and healthy. The "You Can!" Initiative began in South Carolina in May of 2005, when hundreds of seniors gathered at the State House in Columbia to walk with the Lt. Governor and USC track and field and basketball coaches, Curtis Frye and Dave Odom. More information about the You Can! campaign can be found on the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging web site at <http://www.aging.sc.gov/Seniors/YouCan.htm>.

**-###-**  
**(Pictures follow)**



Lt. Governor André Bauer demonstrates a stretching exercise at the second annual statewide "You Can! Steps To Healthier Aging" event held Monday, May 22 at Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia





Seniors at the second annual statewide "You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging" Walk at the Riverbanks Zoo on Monday, May 22 participate in a group stretch prior to beginning the walk.